

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1 and 3-24 are pending in the Application. Claims 1, 4, 6-12, 14, 15, 18, 20, 21 and 23 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Pat. No. JP 2000-226029 to Tashiro et al. ("Tashiro"), in view of Japanese Pat. No. JP 2002-53159 to Hosoi et al. ("Hosoi"). Claims 3, 5 and 16 are rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Tashiro and Hosoi, and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 4,184,605 to Hanson. Claims 13 and 19 are rejected pursuant to 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Tashiro and Hosoi and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 4,923,083 to Forbes. Claim 24 is rejected pursuant to 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over the prior art as applied to Claim 20, and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 3,438,578 to Peterson et al. Claim 17 and 22 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over the prior art as applied to Claims 14 and 20, and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 3,757,989 to Brown.

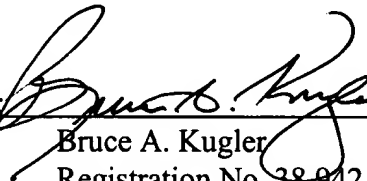
The Examiner has rejected the pending claims pursuant to 35 USC §112 and 35 USC §103. With respect to 35 USC §112, the Applicant has made the necessary amendments to eliminate any new matter rejections, and to overcome the rejections with regard to antecedent basis. With respect to the claim rejections pursuant to 35 USC §103, all of the claims that have been rejected with respect to the combination of Tashiro in view of Hosoi. Upon review of the Hosoi reference, it is respectfully submitted that Hosoi is not prior art, and thus cannot be used in combination with Tashiro to reject the pending claims. More specifically, Hosoi was filed on August 11, 2000 and published on February 19, 2002. A copy of a Thomson/Delphion abstract related to the Hosoi patent is attached herein which sets forth the aforementioned filing and publication dates. Since the Hosoi patent is a foreign patent that was published after the January 8, 2001 filing date of the present application, Hosoi is not prior art pursuant to 35 USC §102 or 35 USC §103.

*Application No. 09/757,362*

Since the Hosoi reference is not prior art, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are allowable as set forth herein and further based on the Arguments previously submitted in the Amendment and Response filed on February 23, 2004. Accordingly, the pending claims are believed in condition for allowance and a Notice of Allowance and Issue Fee Due is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience. If the Examiner would like to discuss the Hosoi reference and/or this Amendment and Response or claim amendments in greater detail, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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